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# EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

## AFRICA

### EDUCATION FOR ACTION

**A**NOTHER SCHOOL DAY. ONCE AGAIN WAKING BEFORE THE DAY break and marching to class through the moist cold of dawn with a bag of books attached to my back like a ball and chain. As my fingers ached from scribbling in my notebook the last thing on my mind was any thought on the privileges or benefits of education. But education extends further than merely math and science, language and literature. As Francis Keppel, a US Commissioner of Education, stated, «Education is too important to be left solely to educators.»

Images of classrooms, desks, books and rulers are invoked by the word: 'education.' But not all transfer of knowledge needs to be rigidly structured. As demonstrated in this issue, the positive effects of informal education should not be underestimated. However valuable the informal channels of education are, they are not an obvious alternative to well-thought out educational programmes. It is difficult to decide exact importance of education in development. When people are starving or dying it is hard to declare the importance of education. Nevertheless, without education it is difficult to break through the cycle and to penetrate to the root cause of the problem.

Regardless, leaving people to fester in their ignorance is not the solution. Ignorance is not the bliss that it is purported to be. Education can be the difference between life and death. There are cases where people diagnosed as HIV positive have had to move due to discrimination, some

have even been burnt to death. People go untreated and continue to transmit the disease because they cannot recognize the symptoms or even because they fear the persecution they may face. This behavior may shock some of us, but then, we've most likely had some education on AIDS.

People in desperate situations can endanger the lives of others, but with guidance draw lessons and inspiration from others to channel the actions positively and peacefully. Where will they draw their inspiration from without an adequate education? They will draw it from what they *have* learned, they will draw it from the tragedy and desperation that surrounds them already. They remain under siege by their ignorance of an alternate method. As we advocate the distribution of knowledge we should always keep in the back of our minds what can be done with the knowledge. In the words of Herbert Spencer, «The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action.»

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#### SOURCES

AVERT – HIV/AIDS Education, <http://www.avert.org/aidseducation.htm>

UN MDGs, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

UNESCO, <http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php->

[URL\\_ID=3160&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3160&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

